2: O'Shea G-3 (1944-1945) 1947 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

On hot evenings Hassan would provide me with a silk *kufieyh*, or Arab gown—which I wore in place of my jacket and shirt; this is a loose, cool garment, ideal for desert conditions and climate. We would sit in rattan chairs on the roof overlooking the sea, sipping the delicious clove-flavoured coffee and discussing philosophy, belles-lettres, or the humanities. Because of his wide reading and understanding, Hassan could see life from the European as well as from the Arab point of view, and his interpretations of Arab mentality and character helped me considerably to understand his people.

Most of the Arab tribes in south-east Arabia are extremely strict in their interpretation of the Koran but, as with the followers of other religions, there are exceptions to this rule. Many who profess and call themselves good Moslems are extremely unorthodox in practice. The fast of Ramadan is, without exception, vigilantly observed by all Mohammedans, but a great many Arabs, especially those of the merchant class, fail to observe the stern tenets of the Prophet. Prayers are dutifully said at the prescribed hours, especially at sunset, when the faithful perform their genuflections and prostrations with religious zeal. But the middle and upper classes are rather liberal in their religious ideas. It is not uncommon for an Arab to smoke, even in public. The younger men prefer Turkish or Egyptian cigarettes, although most of the native shops in Sharjah and Dubai were well stocked with 'Lucky Strike', 'Camels' and 'Players', the source of these supplies being traceable to the U.S. and the R.A.F. canteens. The troops had no scruples about selling their rations for cash.

The older men would smoke native-grown tobacco in tiny pipes scarcely bigger than an acorn cup. After a few short puffs the brittle leaf would crumble into ashes, but they seemed to derive such pleasure from these brief smokes, perhaps because the leaf was tinctured with hashish. After use the pipe is placed in a small sheepskin pouch, which the Arabs carry about in the folds of their *abbas*, or gowns. The hubble-bubble is a Turkish innovation, used largely by the Persians and Parsees, and a crude form of this pipe is manufactured in Oman and sold in the bazaars.

The Arab seldom touches alcohol, and it is an offence to distil, import or drink it in Sharjah territory. Nevertheless, a certain amount of bad Indian gin is brought in by the ships, and arrack is certainly distilled by the Indians in secret. I have never seen an Arab in these parts drink spirits, although an American officer once